

PAINTINGS BY THE "SIXTIES GENERATION" FROM THE AJARA ART MUSEUM

Rati Chiburdanidze

PhD in Theory and History of Art

Professor at Batumi Art State University

E-mail: ratichib@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7367-0765>

Abstract. The Ajara Art Museum is one of the significant centers of contemporary Georgian culture. The exhibits preserved in its collections form a substantial body of work that provides a clear understanding of the main stages of 20th-century Georgian visual art. Within this diverse collection, a special place is occupied by painted works by outstanding representatives of the "Sixties Generation" creative cohort, which are displayed in the museum's permanent exhibition. These artists are: Zurab Nizharadze, Nikoloz (Koka) Ignatov, Givi Toidze, Radish Tordia, and Koki Makharadze.

Keywords: "Sixties Generation"; artistic language renewal; figurative thinking.

Introduction. As is well known, at the turn of the 1950s-60s, an entire pleiad of young artists emerged on the creative stage, boldly breaking the taboo on formal searches and revealing the general tendency of this period's art - the aspiration toward the renewal of artistic language. These authors were primarily interested in solving coloristic problems, which served to emphasize the visual-decorative means of painting, and the intrinsic or visual properties of color. All of this ultimately laid the foundation for the formation of a solid, conscious chromatic system in their work. The "Sixties Generation" paid great attention to form as one of the most important means of revealing the artistic-figurative structure of a painting. Their creative approach to various artistic problems, direct and individual perception of the world, and figurative thinking define the main sphere of these masters' interests.

Methods. For the purpose of the study of the presented topic, the work employs methods based on the correlation of scientific literature and artistic-stylistic and comparative analysis of the mentioned works by specific artists.

Discussion. **Zurab Nizharadze** is a profound and refined artist distinguished by high artistic and professional culture and distinctive, interesting thinking. The artist's work represents a significant contribution to the development of Georgian painting in the second half of the 20th century. His canvases executed with bold chromatic combinations - portraits of contemporaries, still lifes, nude studies, or thematic compositions - transform before the viewer into a unified system, an individual world. Z. Nizharadze is distinguished by a subtle sense of colorism. He pays great attention to the chromatic range and painterly effects. The artist's favorite colors are: red, blue, yellow, green. Along with rich chromaticism, his works are characterized by expressive texture and thick, impasto brushwork. In his works, color shimmers, glows, and acquires a major tonality. In Z. Nizharadze's paintings, color represents the primary component of form revelation. It is precisely through contrasts built on the intensity of colors that the artist achieves the transmission of volumetric form characteristic of his work. Z. Nizharadze's painting "Woman with Balls of Thread" (canvas, oil. 81X60. 1991) is one of the most charming examples of his nude studies cycle, distinguished by refined chromaticism, resonant colorism, and romantic mood. The painting depicts a cross-legged sitting figure holding balls of thread in raised hands, with balls of different colors also placed at her feet, lending a certain dynamism to the composition. The background of the work features broad brushstrokes of greenish, bluish, and yellowish tones, which give the painting a particular spatiality and harmonious wholeness. Z. Nizha-

radze's painting with the same title dates to 1980. The composition of this work is virtually identical to the specimen preserved in the art museum. It should be noted that Z. Nizharadze, as an improviser, repeatedly returns to his familiar motifs. These are a kind of authorial variations on such themes as: "Woman with Parrot," "Roman Scenes," etc.

Nikoloz (Koka) Ignatov is one of the significant representatives of Georgian painting in the second half of the 20th century. The artist's multifaceted work encompasses various spheres. He created with equal success both monumental-decorative art and easel painting and graphic works, created illustrations, and worked in theater and cinema. It is interesting that over time, parallel to N. Ignatov's characteristic "traditional" individual manner, tendencies characteristic of contemporary art emerged in his work. Such are the decorations executed in the 1970s for ballet performances: "Oresteia," "The Trivia" (to Mozart's music), "Chaconne" (to Bach's music), etc., which are tinged with a kind of surrealist coloring. A certain conceptual approach can be discerned in the series "Stones" executed by the author in the 1990s in a naturalistic manner. From this perspective, the panel "In the Artist's Studio" (canvas, acrylic. 150X250. 1997) preserved in the museum is particularly interesting, distinguished by the figurativeness, stylization, and emphasized decorativeness characteristic of the author. It should be noted that in this work, the principles of easel painting and wall painting are organically merged. The foreground of the work depicts a realistically executed palette, paint tubes, and other artistic inventory; in the center of the painting stands a naturalistically painted easel on which a still unpainted white canvas is mounted. Behind the easel is a "bird's-eye view" round table with a green apple placed on it - precisely this fragment is transferred by the artist to the still unfinished canvas. The background of the composition presents generalized scenes depicting various parts of Georgia, monuments of material culture, people's way of life, and folkloric motifs. All of this as a whole creates an original narrative plot on the theme of man, nature, and homeland. N. Ignatov belongs to the ranks of artists who, together with like-minded individuals, created a new epoch and discovered their own world - monumental, generalized, abstracted. In his best creations, along with contemporary Western tendencies, clearly expressed national origins are presented.

The main themes of **Givi Toidze's** diverse work are: old Tbilisi, landscapes of various parts of Georgia, still lifes, portraits, and genre scenes. His works are distinguished by intense colorism and meticulously expressive painterly texture. A special place in the artist's work is occupied by the theme of old Tbilisi, which the artist conveys with particular warmth and lyricism. Such is the canvas "Old Tbilisi, Mosque" (canvas, oil. 100X120. 1993) displayed in the museum, which depicts a colorful district of old Tbilisi - Abanotubani. The work is clearly divided into two planes - the foreground presents one-, two-, and three-story old-fashioned houses with balconies and stained-glass windows standing adjacent to each other, and the monumental minaret of the mosque, whose diagonal or vertical lines lend dynamism to the composition. In the lower right corner of the painting are presented figures of women dressed in colorful dresses, which brings a living impulse here - the woman standing on the left in profile has a bundle of firewood on her shoulder, while the middle and right characters are depicted in uniform poses. The entire vertical of the right edge of the composition is occupied by a large tree half-covered in leaves, which peculiarly frames and also unifies the spatial structure of the painting. This attractive landscape is crowned by the Narikala fortress presented in the background with powerful towers and magnificent walls. G. Toidze is a peculiar chronicler of the history of Tbilisi and Georgia, as many of the views reflected in his works, unfortunately, no longer exist today.

Radish Tordia's work holds an important place for women's portraits and genre scenes imbued with particular lyricism, characterized by refined chromaticism and poetic mood. The artist's compositions are laconically constructed, in which the planar-rhythmic origin of the painting and a certain conventionality of the color scheme are clearly discernible. The painting "Young Lady in White" (canvas, oil. 79X75. 1992) is distinguished by a warm, chromatic colorism. The sitting figure of the character presented in 3/4 turn, holding

a bird with spread wings in her hand, seems immersed in her own thoughts. Her simple "white" dress is treated with bluish, yellowish-pinkish spots so that the model seems wrapped in a chromatic veil. This feeling is strengthened by the simple background of the work. It should be noted that in 1988, R. Tordia created an absolutely identical work on this motif. His brush produced similar compositions executed at different times with insignificant differences: "Girl with Pink Bird" (1987), "Waiting" (1988), "Melancholy" (1997), etc., which evoke certain romantic and symbolic feelings in the viewer. By this method, R. Tordia repeatedly resorts to paraphrasing experienced themes, where his personal, humanistic attitude toward such idyllic subjects is discernible.

Koki Makharadze is one of the significant creators with original vision of the "Sixties Generation," whose works' artistic language is defined by the generalization of form, the intensity of color's visual-decorative resonance, and the expressiveness of brushwork. Over time, his handwriting undergoes certain changes, specifically, if in the 1950s-60s the artist's interest was conditioned by the creation of a "great thematic painting" and the attempt to establish monumental form in easel painting, which is simultaneously one of the main characteristics of Georgian painting of this period, in the late stage of his work, the author's interest primarily serves the revelation of the painting's visual-plastic expressiveness and the maximally emotional resonance of the subject. Precisely these features characterize K. Makharadze's painting "Composition on a Historical Theme" (canvas, oil. 60X70. 1986), which adorns the art museum's permanent exhibition. The painting depicts a multi-figured dynamic scene. In the foreground, in the center, are presented five characters arranged in an arc. Judging from their poses and gestures, they seem resigned to fate and doomed to captivity. In the lower right corner is presented a stooped lady dressed in a red cloak; she is helping a woman who has fallen beside her. Two horsemen encircle the group of presented people, frantically spurring their horses. The drama of the work is further intensified by the tense dark colorism, the expressive rendering of the figures, and the ominous background executed with free, impasto brushstrokes. It is significant that here the conditional title of the painting does not allow for precise interpretation of its content, but considering the artistic-stylistic and certain compositional details, it evokes a certain association with K. Makharadze's famous battle panel "Battle of Krtsanisi," which was created in 1983. Possibly this canvas is also inspired by this motif.

Conclusion. From all of the above, we can conclude that the "Sixties Generation" broke the prohibition on formal quest. These artists set common goals, but they each traveled their own path of development and created works that clearly reflect each of their creative credos. The significant shifts that occurred in the 1950s-60s, which marked all spheres of cultural life at that time, conditioned the establishment of new methods of artistic expression, which created broad possibilities for the revelation of the artist's uniqueness. In visual art, artists' aspiration toward the creation of generalized images and the figurative-aesthetic perception of the world clearly emerged. The best representatives of this generation fully revealed their own worldview in their works and expressed their own attitude toward the surrounding world.

References

- Janberidze, N. (1989). *"Quest and Tradition"*. Tbilisi: Metsniereba.
- Karaia, I. (2010). *"Radish Tordia," Art Album Radish Tordia*. Tbilisi: Magtikomi.
- Otskheli, I. (2002). *"Givi Toidze's Works," Art Album Givi Toidze*. Tbilisi: Omega Tegi.
- Shervashidze, N. (2011). *"Time and Creator," Art Album Koki Makharadze*. Tbilisi: Magticomi.
- Tolstoy, V. (1982). *"Nikolai Ignatov" (In Russian)*. Moscow: Soviet Artist.
- Zinger, E. (1985). *"Zurab Nizharadze" (In Russian)*. Moscow: Soviet Artist.

Illustrative material

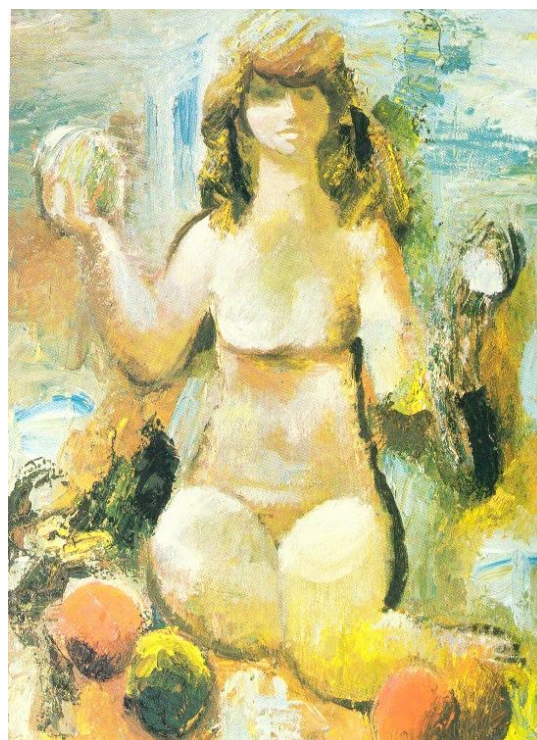
Zurab Nizharadze

„Woman with Balls of Thread“

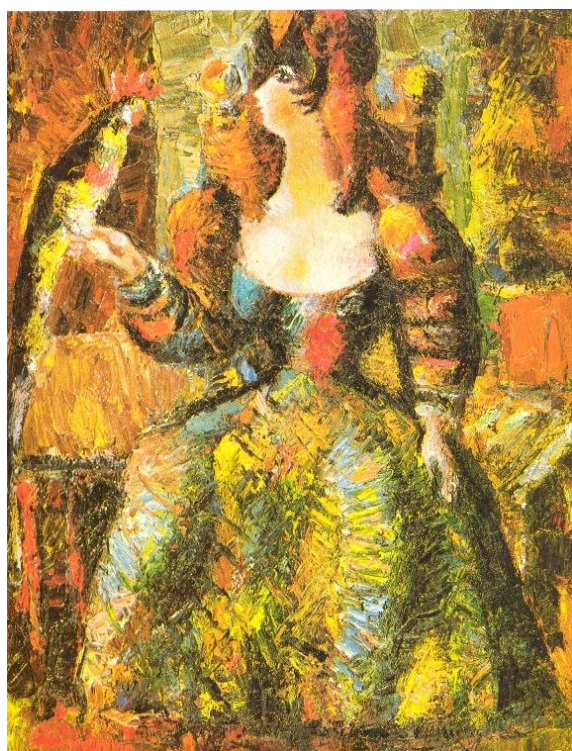
1991



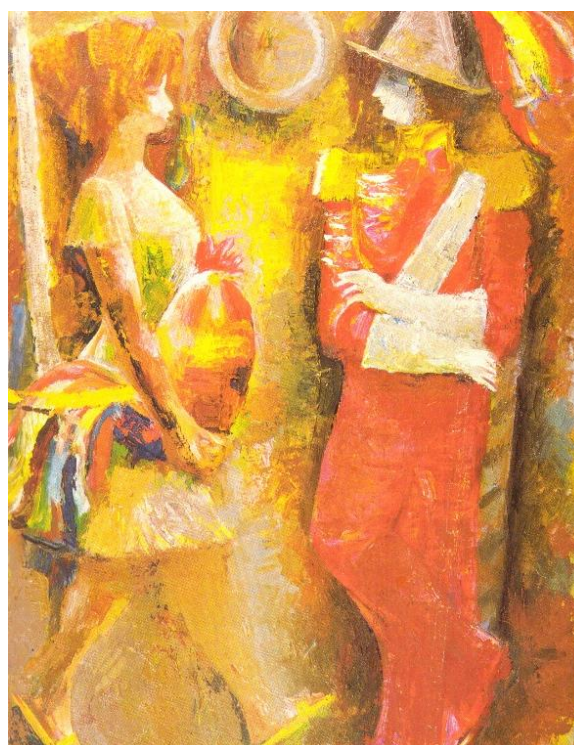
1980



„Woman with Parrot," 1974



"Roman Scenes" 1968



Nikoloz (Koka) Ignatov
"In the Artist's Studio" 1997



Decoration sketches. 1975



the series "Stones" 1990-s.

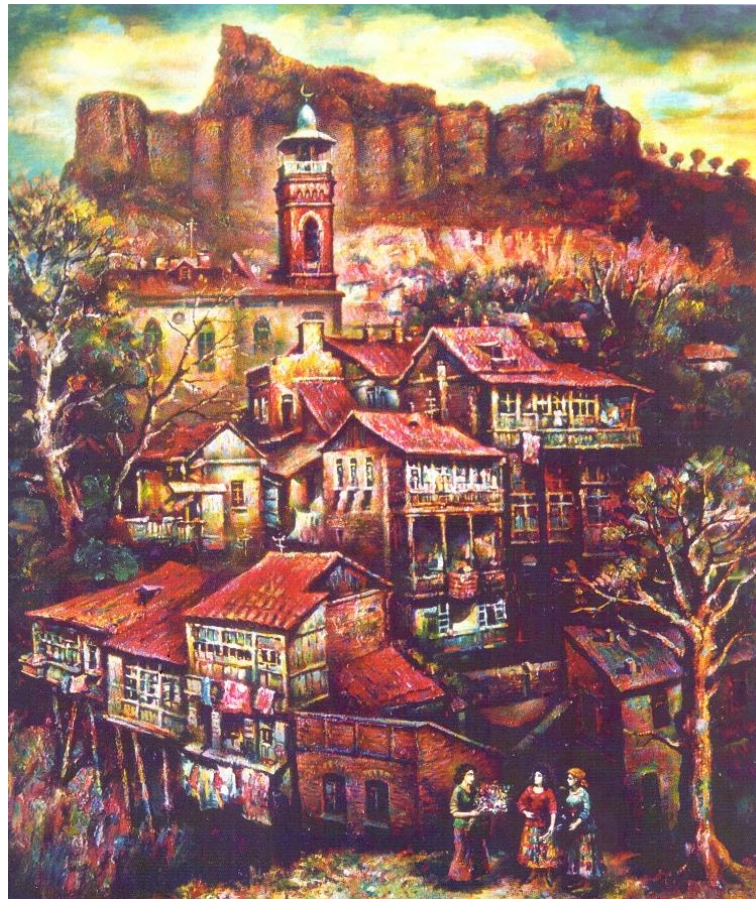


Givi Toidze

"Old Tbilisi, Mosque" 1993



„Narikala“ 1992



Radish Tordia

„Young Lady in White“

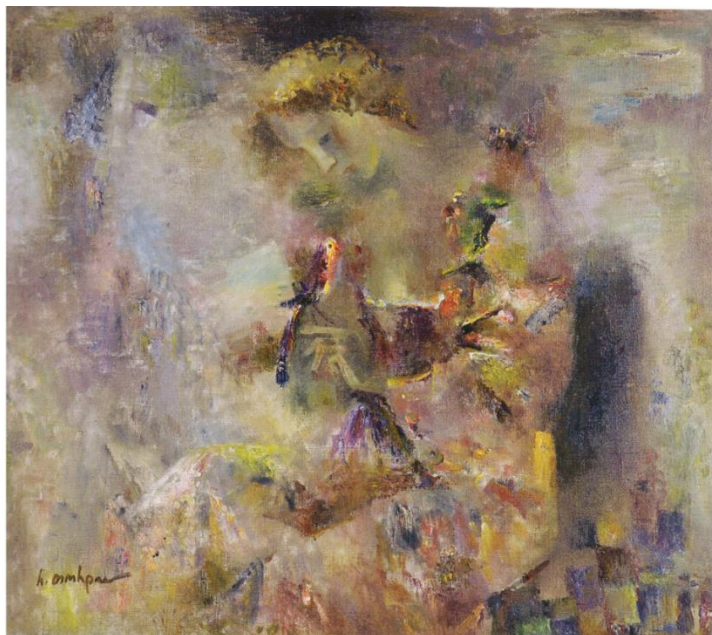
1992



1988



„Melancholy“ 1998



„Girl with Pink Bird“ 1987



Koki Makharadze

"Battle of Krtsanisi" 1983



"Composition on a Historical Theme" 1986

